

Prayer
Requests



The Congregation at Prayer
The Whole Story

2025

A Daily Devotional

St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



Week #8-The Whole Story
Pre-Lent: Week of Septuagesima
February 16-February 23, 2025

Start Every Day

"In the Name of the Father, and + of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen"

recite **APOSTLE'S CREED**

Read Catechism—Sacrament of the Altar: Who receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy

and well prepared who has faith in these words:
“Give and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words “for you” require all hearts to believe.

VERSE: Deuteronomy 6:4 “**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.**”

PRAYER of the WORD

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, February 16

- Read **Psalm 47** (Clap your hands, all peoples!)
- Read **The Torah: Exodus 1-3**

CAESARIUS OF ARLES (470-543AD): We have heard in the lesson which was read, dearly beloved, that “when Joseph was dead, the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful and prolific, and they sprang up like grass.” What does this mean, brethren? As long as Joseph lived the children of Israel are not recorded to have increased or multiplied very much, but after he died they are said to have sprung up like the grass. Surely they should have increased and multiplied more when they were under the patronage and protection of Joseph.

Almighty, victorious,
Thy great name we praise.

- 2 Unresting, unshaking,
and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting,
Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains
high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains
of goodness and love.
- 3 To all life Thou givest—
to both great and small—
In all life Thou livest,
the true Life of all;
We blossom and flourish
as leaves on the tree
And wither and perish—
but naught changes Thee.
- 4 Great Father of glory,
pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore Thee,
all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render:
O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor
of light that hides Thee.

Text: W. Chalmers Smith, 1824–1908, alt.
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Your Personal Prayers

pray LORD'S PRAYER

Luther's Morning Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Luther's Evening Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

802 IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, GOD ONLY WISE

1 Immortal, invisible,
God only wise,
In light inaccessible
hid from our eyes,
Most blessèd, most glorious,
the Ancient of Days,

These words were prefigured in that Joseph, dearly beloved; but in our Joseph, that is, in Christ the Lord, they were fulfilled in truth. Before our Joseph died, that is, before he was crucified, few people believed in him, but after he died and rose again throughout the world the Israelites, that is, the Christian people, increased and multiplied. Thus even the Lord himself says in the Gospel: "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." After the precious grain of wheat died and was buried through the passion, from that one grain a harvest of the church sprang up throughout the world. Not as formerly was "God renowned in Judah" alone, nor is "his great name" worshiped only "in Israel"; but "from the rising of the sun unto the going down"⁸ his name is praised. SERMON 94.1.¹

Monday, February 17

- Read **Psalm 48** (Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God!)
- Read **The Torah: Exodus 4-6**

TERTULLIAN (155-250AD): But we know that prophecy expressed itself by things no less than by words. By words and also by deeds is the

¹ Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

resurrection foretold. When Moses puts his hand into his bosom and then draws it out again dead, and again puts his hand into his bosom and plucks it out living, does not this apply as an anticipation of the resurrection to all humankind?—inasmuch as those three signs denoted the threefold power of God: when it shall, first, in the appointed order, subdue to man the old serpent, the devil, however formidable; then, second, draw forth the flesh from the bosom of death; and then, at last, shall pursue all blood [shed] in judgment. ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH 28.1–2.²

Tuesday, February 18

- Read ***Psalm 49*** (Hear this, all peoples! Give ear, all inhabitants of the world)
- Read ***The Torah: Exodus 7-9***

AMBROSE (333-397AD): He cast down his rod, and it became a serpent which devoured the serpents of Egypt. This signified that the Word should become flesh to destroy the poison of the dread serpent by the forgiveness and pardon of sins. For the rod stands for the Word that is true, royal, filled with power and glorious in ruling. As the rod became a serpent, so he who was the Son of God begotten of the Father became the Son of man born of a

² Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

authors of calumnies, devotees of quarrels rather than of charity, by their uneasiness they do not admit to themselves the repose of a spiritual sabbath. Men do not observe a spiritual sabbath unless they devote themselves to earthly occupations so moderately that they still engage in reading and prayer, at least frequently, if not always. As that apostle says, “Be diligent in reading and in teaching”;³¹ and again, “Pray without ceasing.” Men of this kind honor the sabbath in a spiritual manner. SERMON 100.4.⁷

Sunday, February 23

- Read ***Psalm 54*** (O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might.)
- Read ***The Torah: Exodus 22-24***

End Every Day

Pray the Collect for the Septuagesima

O Lord, graciously hear the prayers of Your people that we who justly suffer the consequence of our sin may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

⁷ Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Egypt, no more than two of these entered the Promised Land. Hence we must strive to take our models of virtue from the few and far between, since, according to that figure of speech in the Gospel, many are said to be called but few are said to be chosen.³ Bodily renunciation and removal from Egypt, as it were, will be of no value to us, therefore, if we have been unable to obtain at the same time the renunciation of heart which is more sublime and more beneficial. CONFERENCE 3.7.6–7.⁶

Saturday, February 22

- Read ***Psalm 53*** (The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”)
- Read ***The Torah: Exodus 19-21***

CAESARIUS OF ARLES: The third precept is “Remember to keep holy the sabbath day.” In this third commandment is suggested a certain idea of freedom, a repose of the heart or tranquility of the mind which a good conscience effects. Indeed, sanctification is there because the Spirit of God dwells there. Now look at the freedom or repose; our Lord says, “Upon whom shall I rest but upon the man who is humble and peaceable, and who trembles at my words?” Therefore restless souls turn away from the Holy Ghost. Lovers of strife,

⁶ Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

woman. Like the serpent, he was lifted up on the cross, poured his healing medicine on the wounds of humanity. Wherefore the Lord himself says, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” DUTIES OF THE CLERGY 3.15.94.³

Wednesday, February 19

- Read ***Psalm 50*** (The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth)
- Read ***The Torah: Exodus 10-12***

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS (329-389AD): What say you? Thus it has pleased him that you should come forth out of Egypt, the iron furnace; that you should leave behind the idolatry of that country and be led by Moses and his lawgiving and martial rule. I give you a piece of advice which is not my own, or rather which is very much my own, if you consider the matter spiritually. Borrow from the Egyptians vessels of gold and silver. With these take your journey. Supply yourself for the road with the goods of strangers, or rather with your own. There is money owing to you, the wages of your bondage and of your brick making. Be clever on your side too in asking retribution. Be an honest robber. You did suffer wrong there while you were fighting with

³ Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

the clay (that is, this troublesome and filthy body) and were building cities foreign and unsafe, whose memorial perishes with a cry. What then? Do you come out for nothing and without wages? But why will you leave to the Egyptians and to the powers of your adversaries that which they have gained by wickedness and will spend with yet greater wickedness? It does not belong to them. They have ravished it and have sacrilegiously taken it as plunder from him who says, "The silver is mine and the gold is mine, and I give it to whom I will." Yesterday it was theirs, for it was permitted to be so. Today the master takes it and gives it to you that you may make a good and saving use of it. Let us make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us in the time of judgment. ORATION 45.20.⁴

Thursday, February 20

- Read ***Psalm 51*** (Create in me a clean heart, O God)
- Read ***The Torah: Exodus 13-15***

GREGORY OF NYSSA (335-394AD): Again, according to the view of the inspired Paul, the people itself, by passing through the Red Sea, proclaimed the good tidings of salvation by water. The people passed

⁴ Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

over, and the Egyptian king with his host was engulfed, and by these actions this sacrament was foretold. For even now, whensoever the people is in the water of regeneration, fleeing from Egypt, from the burden of sin, it is set free and saved. But the devil with his own servants (I mean, of course, the spirits of evil) is choked with grief and perishes, deeming the salvation of men to be his own misfortune. ON THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.⁵

Friday, February 21

- Read ***Psalm 52*** (Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man?)
- Read ***The Torah: Exodus 16-18***

JOHN CASSIAN (360-432AD): Although this manner of speaking first referred to that people, nonetheless we see it now daily fulfilled in our life and profession. For everyone who has first renounced this world and then returns to his former pursuits and his erstwhile desires proclaims that in deed and in intention he is the same as they were, and he says, "It was well with me in Egypt."

I fear that there will be found as many such people as we read there were multitudes of sinners in the time of Moses. For although six hundred and three thousand armed men were said to have left

⁵ Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.